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Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus Members Applaud House Passage of the DREAM Act

Stake is high for Asian Pacific Islander students, who make up 40% of DREAM students in CA

Washington, DC – US Rep. Mike Honda (CA-15), chairman of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), along with CAPAC executive board members, issued the following statements applauding today's passage of the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, a bill which provides for conditional permanent resident status for undocumented students who arrived at in our country at a young age:

Rep. Mike Honda (CA-15), CAPAC Chair: "As chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, I fought hard for this bill because Asian American and Pacific Islanders have a major stake in the immigration debate with over 1.5 million Asian undocumented immigrants in the US. That's 12 percent of all undocumented immigrants, a demographically disproportionate number given that AAPIs comprise 4.4 percent of American society. When it came to the DREAM Act, however, the stake was even more stark. In my state of California, for example, over 40 percent of DREAM Act beneficiaries are Asian. Now that the DREAM Act passed, 65,000 of our best-behaving students graduating high school every year - honor roll students, star athletes, talented artists and aspiring teachers - will be able to enter college or the military, gain upward mobility and contribute \$3.6 trillion in taxes over the next 40 years."

Senator Daniel K. Akaka (Hawaii): "Children who grow up in our great country and know no other homeland, who graduate high school here, obey the law, and seek to contribute to our society, deserve the opportunity to join the military, go to college, start a career, and pursue the American dream. It is cruel to punish them for something they had no control over."

Congressman Eni Faleomavaega (AS), CAPAC Vice Chair: "The Dream Act is an important piece of legislation that will give many young people an opportunity to further pursue their education given their adverse circumstances. Through no fault of their own, we must not penalize the children of those who were brought to the U.S. illegally by their parents at such a young age. It is only fair that we give them an opportunity which I believe will not only improve our U.S. workforce but will be a great help to our U.S. military."

Congresswoman Madeleine Z. Bordallo (GU), CAPAC Secretary: "The American DREAM Act represents an opportunity to address an important issue to the Asian American and Pacific Islander community. I have heard from many of my constituents who support this bill, and

along with the leaders of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community, I urge the Senate to move quickly to pass this legislation."

Congressman Xavier Becerra (CA-31), CAPAC Executive Board Member: "The dream is within reach of becoming reality. And it's no mystery why both Democrats and Republicans supported the DREAM Act—it's a sensible solution that embodies fundamental American values. This bill pulls from the shadows children who grew up pledging allegiance to our flag, speaking our language and—despite difficult circumstances—graduating from our high schools.

"Pay your fees and taxes, put on the uniform to serve our country or excel so that you are college bound. That is the way to get on the right path as an immigrant. The DREAM Act is not only the right thing to do for some of the best and brightest children caught in a broken immigration system, it is a smart thing to do for our country and our future."

Congresswoman Judy Chu (CA-32), CAPAC Executive Board Member: "There are 1.5 million undocumented immigrants of Asian descent in the United States. Many of these are dedicated hard-working students just trying to reach their dreams. Students like David Cho, Drum Major for the UCLA Marching band who wants to join the Air Force, and serve his country, when this bill becomes law. As a member of the Immigration Subcommittee, I have been fighting for months to bring this bill to the House Floor – and now we have done it! It is for David, and the thousands like him, that I was proud to vote in favor of the DREAM Act. I strongly urge my Senate colleagues to act quickly to make David's dream a reality."

Congressman Al Green (TX-09), CAPAC Executive Board Member: "There is a right time for all things -- a time to dream and a time to make dreams real. This is why I strongly support the passage of the DREAM Act, a bill which would give students in this country the opportunity to contribute their full talents to America's future. Allowing these productive young people, with good moral character, to serve in the military or continue their education is an investment in the American Dream. By helping these students realize their full potential, America as a whole will realize its full potential. The time is right to seize the DREAM!"

Congresswoman Mazie Hirono (HI-02), CAPAC Executive Board Member: "Our nation was founded on the powerful ideals of freedom and tolerance. These are values that still elude other nations to this day, which is why the American Dream endures in the minds of so many around the world. As an immigrant to this country myself, I know the power of that dream. My vote today is in support of the high-achieving and patriotic children who already call this country home."

Congresswoman Doris Matsui (CA-05), CAPAC Executive Board Member: "We must do all that we can to expand both educational and employment opportunities for children in America. Enactment of the DREAM Act will strengthen our economy and improve our position in the global marketplace. It will also allow undocumented, immigrant students who have been living in the U.S. an opportunity to give back to the country that has given so much to them."

Congressman Robert C. “Bobby” Scott (VA-03), CAPAC Executive Board Member: “The Dream Act will allow non-resident students who grew up in the United States an opportunity to pursue higher education or serve in the military. By doing so, we not only contribute to our economy and our nation’s defense, but also reduce the prospects of crime, welfare and other problems and costs associated with lack of education or work skills.”

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The Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) is comprised of Members of Congress of Asian and Pacific Islander descent and members who have a strong dedication to promoting the well-being of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. Since 1994, CAPAC has been addressing the needs of the AAPI community in all areas of American life. For more information on CAPAC, please call (202) 225-2631 or visit <http://www.honda.house.gov/capac>.